

RESOLUTION NO. 20120614-021

WHEREAS, people with disabilities comprise a growing percentage of the local customer base for taxicab service; and

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act mandates that people with disabilities have equal access to transportation; and

WHEREAS, Title 13 of Austin's Transportation Code dictates that 6-6.5% of each franchise holder's taxicab fleet consist of modified vehicles which include equipment for loading and unloading passengers using wheelchairs and safety devices to hold wheelchairs while the vehicle is in motion; and

WHEREAS, these modified vehicles are operated with special franchise permits which are not subject to owner-operator requirements or formula caps, and franchise holders who operate under special franchise permits are required to provide training for drivers, dispatchers, and telephone agents with respect to modified ground transportation service vehicles; and

WHEREAS, in the 2010 report "Assessing the Full Cost of Implementing an Accessible Taxicab Program," Dr. Ray Mundy notes several challenges regarding the provision of accessible taxicab service within the context of a system in which drivers are independent contractors over whom franchises have little control; and

WHEREAS, the 2011 Austin Taxicab/Pedicab/ELSV Study by Dr. Ray Mundy found that Austin's current taxicab fleet is not able to meet the peak demand effectively and proposes that the city create peak demand permits that are available only during peak times; and

WHEREAS, accessible taxicab service in Austin remains inconsistent and poorly reported, with riders who request accessible taxicabs waiting much longer than those who do not require accessible taxicabs, and are sometimes not able to get a taxicab at all; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City of Austin is dedicated to ensuring that passengers requesting accessible taxicab service are subject to wait times that are no longer than those for passengers who request regular taxicab service, and also strives to reduce wait times for all users during peak times.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to create performance measures to enable staff to compare, for each franchise holder, the average wait times for those requesting accessible service versus the average wait times for those requesting regular taxicab service. Current performance measures and requirements that do not inform staff of progress toward this goal may be eliminated. These performance measures should be recorded on a per-taxicab basis and should include, but not be limited to:

1. wait times for all accessible rides;
2. wait times for regular rides during both peak and off-peak times;
3. total number of trips that include a wheelchair, requested;
4. total number of trips that include a wheelchair, provided; and
5. number of accessible/peak permit taxicabs in service at any given time.

The primary goal of these performance measures will be to ensure that the standard passenger wait time for accessible taxicabs is not longer than the wait time for regular taxicabs.

After a one-year transition period, if a franchise holder does not meet the standard described above for two consecutive quarters, the permits of any vehicles that do not meet this standard may be subject to becoming regular franchise permits or Council could consider reducing the number of permits allocated to that franchise. Alternatively, the Council may consider action including, but not limited to, revoking permits or transferring them to another franchise. Consideration may be given to fleet size in making this assessment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

All future special franchise permits should be considered by Council for company-owned vehicles only. Those driving under special franchise permits with company-owned vehicles should be expected to meet specific criteria determined by staff to ensure that they prioritize service to those requiring accessible vehicles.

Franchise owners with special franchise permits shall be required to use a common accounting system, developed in coordination with city staff, to monitor taxicabs operating under special franchise permits. This accounting system shall also inform the City Manager of levels of demand and needed future allocations of special franchise permits.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to work with stakeholders and the Urban Transportation Commission to develop recommendations for a day-lease program and employee driver program for special franchise permits to meet the city's need for accessible and peak demand taxicab service, as well as a mechanism for third-party verification of accessible taxicab service levels.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

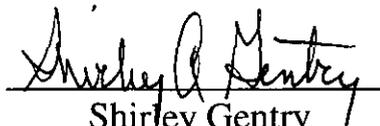
The City Manager is also directed to explore requirements for green company-owned vehicles, the use of centralized dispatch for accessible taxicab trips, and a resource guide for franchises and drivers looking to purchase green vehicles.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager will brief Council on the performance measures and have them in place no later than September 1, 2012 and an analysis and recommendations come back to Council for final approval before implementation no later than January 1, 2013.

ADOPTED: June 14, 2012

ATTEST:


Shirley Gentry
City Clerk